

INDOT 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

Public and Stakeholder Involvement

Overview

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has established a proactive public involvement process in the planning and development of transportation projects. This process provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and transportation programs.

The goal is to develop a continuous public involvement process, accessible to the public, which identifies and addresses critical issues early in the project-development process. It also minimizes duplication of public involvement efforts and meets the needs of the public and resource/regulatory agencies to provide early and continuing input into the project development process.

Communication of the Process

Beginning with the initial development of the 2000 – 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, its subsequent amendments, and carrying through to this 2030 plan update, INDOT has continually expanded its efforts to be inclusive, striving to provide and refine a conduit for stakeholder input into the plan development process. The primary tool used to disseminate information concerning the status of the 2007 plan update has been the INDOT web page located at: <http://www.in.gov/dot/div/planning/lrp/2007plan.htm>. This page is updated with the most recent developments and information resulting from the plan update process. Other tools employed have been a series of early coordination meetings with INDOT District personnel, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Planning Organizations.

MPO Conference and MPO Council

The Indiana MPO Council was founded in 1984; it is an organization consisting of the fourteen Indiana Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The group holds monthly meetings in Indianapolis that are attended by the Executive Directors of each of the MPO or a representative designated by the Executive Director. The group functions as a forum for MPOs to discuss issues and to share solutions. The INDOT Long Range Planning Section has coordinated its planning update efforts with the MPO council on a regular basis. The Long Range Planning Section regularly met with the MPO Council in an effort to keep the council posted as to the progress of the 2030 plan update.

The Indiana MPO Council also conducts an annual conference in the fall of each year. The conference location rotates among the metropolitan areas of the state, depending upon which MPO is hosting the event. INDOT's Planning personnel have traditionally taken an active role in the annual conference, presenting long range transportation planning updates and participating in many of the sessions. This process has been beneficial for all parties, fostering an open-ended communication process between the MPOs and INDOT. The communication

Chapter 3 Public and Stakeholder Involvement

INDOT 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

process resulting from the MPO conferences provides an opportunity for the discussion of issues both formally during the meeting and on a less formal, individual, one-on-one basis between sessions. The INDOT Planning Section relies on this forum to communicate to and include the MPO as true planning partners in the statewide transportation planning process.

Purdue Road School

One of the best venues in Indiana to convey transportation issues is at the annual Purdue University Road School, held at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. One of the oldest of its kind in the nation, Purdue's Road School attracts over 1,500 participants representing state and local governments, engineers, traffic experts and the general public that has an interest in transportation issues. The INDOT Planning staff has taken advantage of this opportunity over the past several years through its attendance and participation in the event.

The input from the Road School sessions has been very valuable to INDOT in evaluating the concerns of the professional transportation community within the State. Road School also provides INDOT with yet another opportunity to interact with local, regional, state, and federal transportation professionals.

Public Involvement in the Annual Program Development Process

As noted in Chapter 2, the INDOT Annual Program Development Process (APDP) is a comprehensive set of procedures intended to provide a formal structure for the evaluation, ranking and programming of INDOT's proposed projects. The final product resulting from the APDP is the publication of the Indiana State Transportation Improvement Program (INSTIP). The APDP has an embedded public involvement component that is activated at various stages throughout the year-long process. The public interaction stems from two primary sources: comments and input received from local elected officials during the early consultation meeting component, and comments and input received directly from the public resulting from the annual District Meetings.

The APDP process begins with an internal INDOT review of the current projects programmed in the INDOT scheduling system. Then, a formal INDOT "call for new projects" is extended to all counties, cities, towns and to INDOT's District offices. This is followed by a series of early consultation meetings where input regarding the proposed projects and any potential scheduling changes is sought from MPOs, RPOs and local elected officials. Representatives from the INDOT Long Range Planning Section are also in attendance at the "early coordination meetings." The purpose of the "early coordination meetings" is to obtain local input and to reach a consensus through consultation as to which proposed projects carry the highest priority and what changes, if any, need to be made within the existing projects listed in the INDOT scheduling system. In late spring or early summer, the annual Open-House District Meetings are held where the public is invited to hear presentations for the INSTIP, the Long Range Plan and other related transportation issues. The annual District Meetings take place after the draft INSTIP has been published. The meetings are vitally important to INDOT because they provide a direct conduit for face-to-face public involvement in the planning and program development process.

Web Site

One of the most useful and promising public involvement tools employed by INDOT has been the development and use of the INDOT internet website. The site contains a wide-range of information about Indiana's transportation system.

The website can be accessed at: <http://www.in.gov/dot/div/planning/lrp/2007plan.htm> (see **Figure 3-1**). It has proven particularly useful in the distribution of up-to-date information regarding the status of the 2030 Long Range Plan update. In addition to the latest updates regarding the development of the 2030 plan, the site provides access to many pertinent planning tools and documents. Notes generated from early coordination meetings with the INDOT District, MPOs and RPOs, and a listing of the projects together with maps showing their locations are

also readily available on the INDOT website. Under the heading of “Tell Us What You Think,” there is a feedback link where the public can e-mail comments or questions about the planning process. The address is also listed for INDOT’s Long Range Transportation Planning Section.

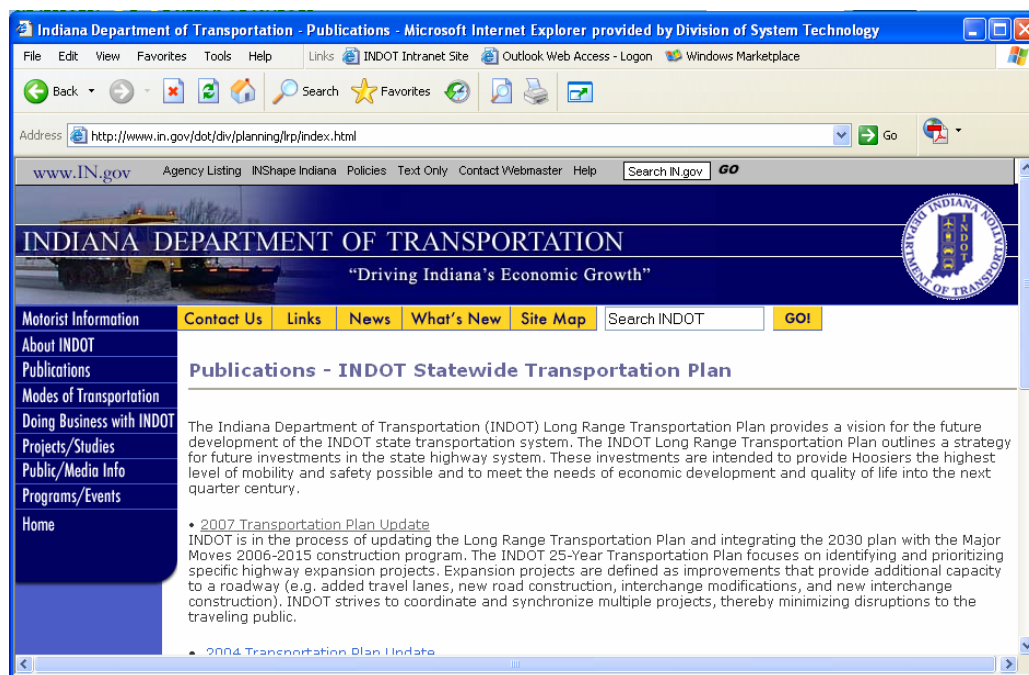


Figure 3-1

MPO Planning

INDOT recognizes the important role that MPOs play in the transportation planning network for Indiana. INDOT participates in the cooperative transportation planning process with each MPO jurisdiction. An effective metropolitan plan incorporates transportation under both local and state jurisdictions. Therefore, INDOT relies on MPOs to include public involvement of their Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Procedures have been developed by each MPO to provide opportunity for the public to offer input on the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (20-25 year planning horizon), and MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). INDOT utilizes the MPO public involvement process as the vehicle for soliciting public comment for INDOT projects within the MPO area. INDOT acknowledges the unique nature of each metropolitan area and has determined that the MPO procedures and the statewide transportation forum meet the planning public involvement requirements of 23 CFR 450.316 (b) for projects within the MPO area.

Early Coordination Meetings

In the 2030 Long Range Plan update process, the long range planning section met with a total of 27 groups to discuss transportation needs and potential improvements. The 27 groups consisted of 6 INDOT District Planning Offices, 14 Metropolitan Planning Organizations and 7 Regional Planning Organizations. In February 2006 preliminary lists of potential 2016 projects to be considered for addition to the 10 year construction program were distributed to District Planning Offices for review and discussion with their planning partners. District Planning Offices were also requested to identify any “new” potential improvements. These projects were reviewed in series

Chapter 3 Public and Stakeholder Involvement

INDOT 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

of 18 consultation meetings in May 2006. At each meeting a list of potential candidate 2016 projects to be evaluated for addition to the 10 year construction program were discussed along with previously identified long range plan 2017 to 2030 projects. Consultation partners were asked to review preliminary ranking and submit planning information and letters of community support for these potential projects.

Following the review and comments received in the fall of 2006, the Long Range Planning Section worked with the INDOT Fiscal Office in the development of the long range revenue forecast. Project rankings were completed in late 2006. Projects were then matched up with available funding for the 2016 to 2030 time-frame. It is important to note that the 2006 to 2015 time-frame had previously been established and populated with projects through the Major Moves process. The identified projects for 2016 to 2030 were transmitted to the District Planning Offices and the MPOs for additional review and comment in January 2007. An additional follow-up series of review meetings was promptly held with the MPOs and the District Planning Offices prior to publishing the draft list of INDOT Long Range Plan 2016 to 2030 projects. Notes from those January follow-up meetings with the MPOs and the District Planning Offices have been published and are located on the INDOT website and may be accessed at: <http://www.in.gov/dot/div/planning/lrp/2007plan.htm>.

The long range plan development meeting notes represent the early plan development consultation process and do not reflect INDOT decision making for the selection of a specific project or the establishment of improvement priority. These notes document the discussion of improvement alternatives and the identification of issues. INDOT decision making regarding specific projects occurs later in the planning process following the analysis of issues and feedback from transportation stakeholders.

INDOT Market Research Project

In a follow-up to the Planning Assessment Study and in advance of the Policy Plan update, INDOT initiated a market research study. The purpose of the study was to identify issues of importance to the general public, as well as particular stakeholders. The market research study had several components, key of which were:

- A general survey of the population,
- Outreach to stakeholders concerned about environmental justice issues in Indiana,
- Outreach to stakeholders concerned about land resource issues,
- Outreach to stakeholders concerned about freight issues,
- Suggestions for how INDOT might change the Policy Plan in response to the finding of the market research study.

A central component of the market research study was a general survey of the Indiana population aimed at validating INDOT's Policy Plan and identifying emerging areas on which INDOT should focus. The survey also provided an opportunity to identify what transportation issues are important to Indiana residents, and how well INDOT performs in these areas.

The survey was carried out in May 2003 by the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory. It obtained information about travel behavior and socioeconomic characteristics of Indiana residents; analyzed customer attitudes through ratings of policy priorities, importance ratings, and satisfaction with INDOT services; and identified differences in behavior and attitudes by geography, socioeconomics (income, gender, age, auto ownership, household size), and travel behavior. They survey also over-sampled in areas with high concentrations of environmental justice populations.

The survey found that:

- Respondents mostly agree with INDOT's priorities;
- Funding allocation appears to be "about right," but those seeking a reallocation would shift funding to transit, intercity air, and new road construction;
- People are generally aware of INDOT but its exposure could be increased;
- Customers' view of INDOT has remained the same or has slightly improved over the past 12 months;
- INDOT has a positive image in trustworthiness, keeping drivers safe, and helping Indiana's economy; and;
- Areas of concern include treating all parts of the State fairly, and completing construction/maintenance projects on time.

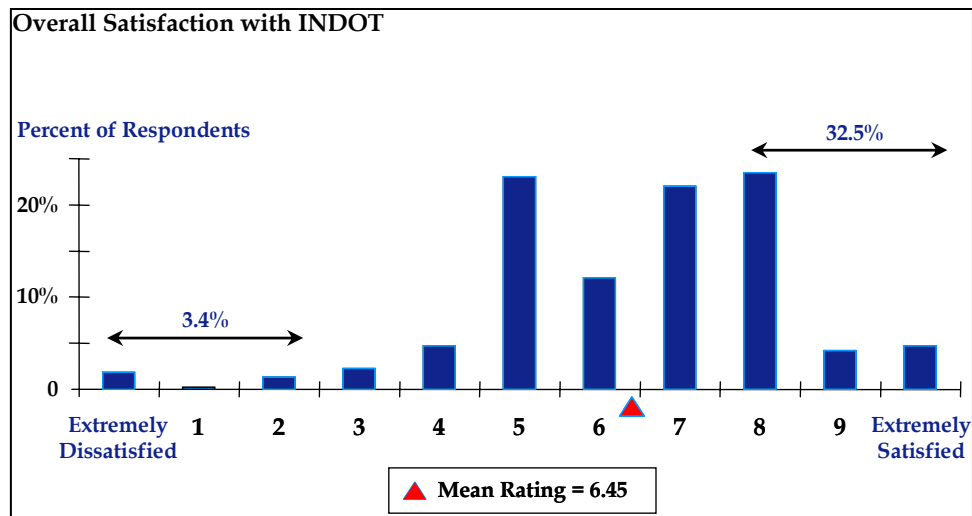


Figure 3-2

In general, there was high and uniform "overall satisfaction" with INDOT.

The survey responses were evaluated for potential implications for long range transportation in Indiana. From that evaluation, it was determined that the nine policy areas continued to be relevant (although there are some emerging areas that should get recognized). People think that INDOT should focus on:

- Congestion management;
- Improved highway maintenance; and
- Scheduling of construction and maintenance projects.

Some of the key emerging issues include land resources and homeland security. The survey identified some polarization of opinion regarding INDOT's role in bus and passenger rail service.

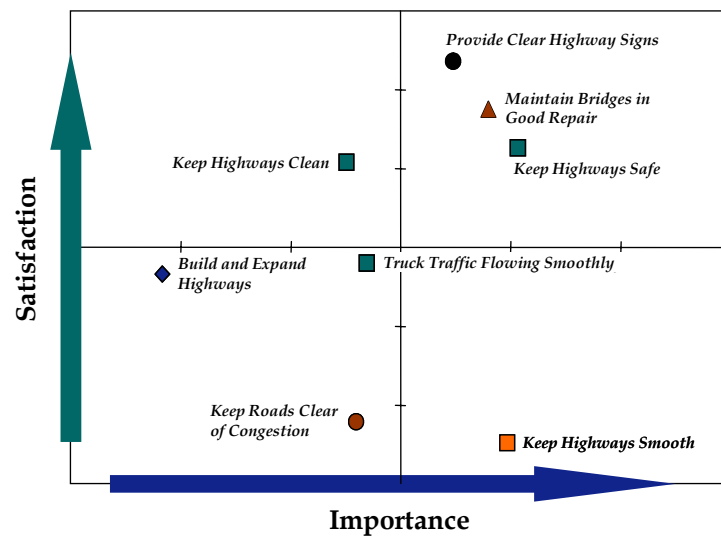


Figure 3-3

Environmental Justice

The concept of *environmental justice* refers, in the broadest sense, to the goal of identifying and avoiding disproportionate adverse impacts on minority and low income individuals and communities. Environmental justice extends community impact assessment by examining communities based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, income, age and even disability. The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) Final Order to address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income populations was published by the U.S. DOT to comply with Executive Order 12989, "*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*," dated February 11, 1994.

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Orders require the U.S. Department of Transportation and its operation administrators to integrate the goals of these orders into their operations through a process developed within the framework of existing requirements, primarily the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) and Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*; the *Uniform Relocation Assistance Act* and *Real Property Acquisitions Act of 1970* (URA); *TEA-21*; and other applicable DOT statutes, regulations and guidance that concern planning, social, economic, or environmental matters; public health or welfare; and public involvement.

Since the passage of NEPA, the FHWA has built a framework of policies and procedures to help meet its social, economic and environmental responsibilities while accomplishing its transportation mission. Environmental Justice (EJ) is a component of FHWA's overall commitment to the protection and enhancement of our human and natural environment. INDOT's Environmental Justice objectives include the following:

- Improve the environment and public health and safety in transportation of people and goods, and the development of transportation systems and services.
- Harmonize transportation policies and investments with environmental concerns, reflecting an appropriate consideration of economic and social interests.
- Consider the interest, issues and contributions of affected communities, disclose appropriate information, and give communities an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making.

INDOT has made special efforts to evaluate and improve the planning and program process in order to ensure compliance with environmental justice regulations. These efforts have a concentrated focus on two initiatives intended to improve the department's ability to achieve the objectives of the environmental justice regulations. The first initiative calls for the development of a new Public Involvement Procedures Manual that will contain special outreach methods to increase minority and low-income population group participation. The second initiative involved the market research effort (study). One aspect of the study was intended to assist in the identification of transportation needs and perceptions of how well transportation services were being delivered to minority and low-income groups.

The purpose of INDOT's Market Research project was to improve INDOT's understanding of the transportation needs of its customers. The objectives of the environmental justice component of the Market Research project were to identify current and potential future transportation-related environmental justice issues with the state of Indiana and to likewise identify potential EJ initiatives that could be undertaken by INDOT.

The population of the State of Indiana, consistent with patterns observed throughout the country, has and is becoming increasingly diverse racially and ethnically, including persons having limited English proficiency. There also is an increasing desire on the part of INDOT, and other state DOTs as well, to improve the manner in which they respond to customer needs, including the explicit recognition of differences among different population or stakeholder groups. The challenge in identifying, monitoring, and satisfying the needs of INDOT's customers is made all the more challenging because of the increasing diversity in the state's population.

In response to these needs, INDOT addressed environmental justice issues as a component in its larger Market Research project. Four specific work program activities were undertaken:

1. Analysis of existing demographic conditions and trends building on the results of the Year 2000 Census of the Population;
2. Interviews with stakeholder, MPO, and INDOT staff;
3. Use of a stratified sample in the market research telephone survey to ensure a statistically valid sample of minority population subgroups; and
4. Development of potential actions that INDOT could take based on the cumulative results of the previous four information gathering activities.

Research Findings:

1. **Indiana is becoming more diverse.** Populations of racial minority groups are increasing at a much faster rate than the general public. Hispanic population has more than doubled between 1990 and 2000.
2. **Seven percent of Indiana households do not own an automobile.** As expected, differences in vehicle ownership and travel mode to work vary by income, race, and ethnicity. Non-EJ households have on average 2.12 vehicles, while EJ households average 1.65 vehicles.
3. **EJ and non-EJ respondent ratings were significantly different for a number of policy issues.** EJ respondents rated the following policy issues as being more important, including:
 - a) Improve bus service;
 - b) Make mobility easier for pedestrians and bicyclists;
 - c) Improve the mobility of low-income, elderly, and the disabled; and
 - d) Improve transportation safety.
4. **EJ issues mentioned.** Specific environmental justice issues mentioned included highway locations that have divided black communities and disproportionately displaced black residents, frequency of bus

Chapter 3 Public and Stakeholder Involvement

INDOT 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

service, hours of the day during which public transportation services are available, adequate financing for public transportation, safe location of bus stops, and roadway maintenance practices.

5. **Environmental justice, however, is perceived by many as not being an important issue except in Northwest Indiana.** “There are so many other issues overshadowing environmental justice that it is rarely mentioned.” Major transportation projects are located more in rural and suburban portions of the State than in the central cities where minority populations are living.
6. **English proficiency is not a significant issue.** Indiana’s population having only a limited proficiency in the English language is growing but to date has not been a problem in terms of communication needs.
7. **INDOT has taken some steps, but needs to do more.** Virtually all of the interviewees acknowledged that INDOT has taken a number of important initiatives to address potential issues of environmental justice. At the same time, they felt INDOT needs to do more. A number of the interviewees felt that not all of the desired perspectives and viewpoints were either at the table or fully represented.
8. **Programmatic-level activity is needed.** The majority of existing environmental justice analyses are occurring at the project level. Consideration of environmental justice also should be addressed in the development of transportation policies and during the development of systems-level transportation plans and programs.

Based on the findings from the environmental justice component of the Market Research project, INDOT is moving forward with potential actions that will improve the agency’s ability to include minority and low-income groups in the transportation planning process and decision-making over future system improvements.

The statewide planning process and statewide transportation improvement program are built upon a partnership based on planning and programming processes with the state’s MPOs. INDOT recognizes the critical role that MPOs play in implementing the environmental justice regulations. As part of this cooperative process, INDOT and the MPOs participated the November 2000 FHWA Environmental Justice Workshop. INDOT participates in the cooperative transportation planning process including activities to ensure environmental justice with each MPO jurisdiction. An effective statewide planning and programming process incorporates transportation planning activities under both local and state jurisdictions. Therefore, INDOT relies on the MPOs to establish and include activities that are designed to ensure compliance with environmental justice regulations as part of their transportation planning work program, long range transportation plan development and transportation improvement program development activities. INDOT utilizes the MPO public involvement process and environmental justice procedures as a major resource in the development of transportation improvement projects.

Minority and Low and Moderate Income Areas: Identification for Environmental Justice Analysis

The following statewide map for INDOT Environmental Justice Analysis (**Figure 3-4**) is based upon two data sources: the 2000 Census Public Law P 94-171 block level population, and racial characteristics and the low and moderate income data from 1990 block group Census figures. Each area is defined by a collection of census block or block group pieces. For the identification of minority areas, more than 51 percent of the block level 2000 population was reported as non-white. For the low and moderate income area identification, more than 51 percent of the residents must be of low or moderate income for a census block group piece to be classified in general. However, specific urban areas fall under an exception that lowers the threshold. The threshold percentage is included in the data supplied by the Caliper Corporation. The 1999 boundaries were used for the exception areas.

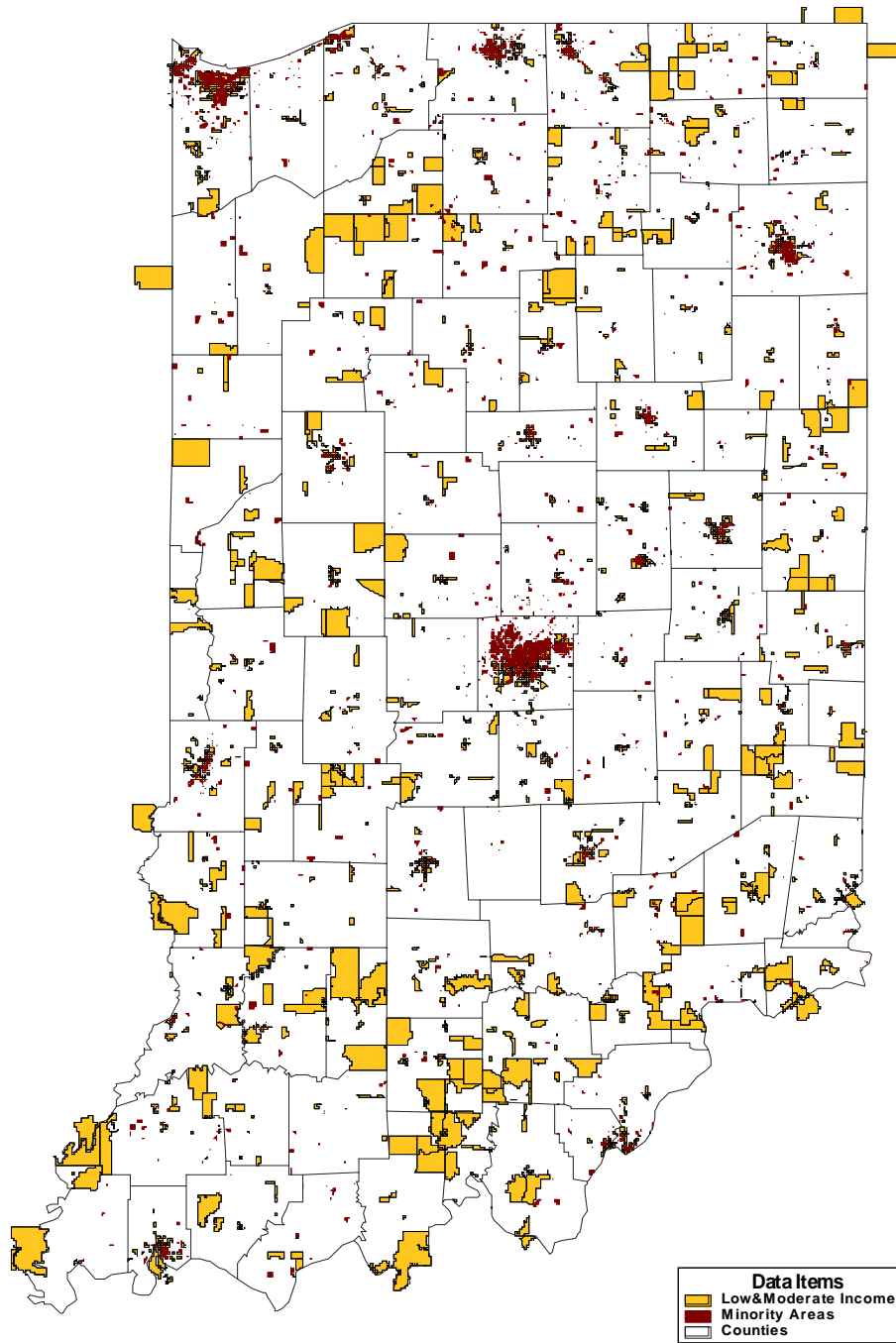


Figure 3-4

Public Comment on the 2030 Long Range Plan Development

Throughout the plan update process, INDOT employed the use of its website as the primary distribution conduit to release information and obtain public input regarding the various stages development. The website was updated on a timely basis, providing new information whenever significant milestones were achieved. The site also contained a “Tell Us What You Think” link that provided the user with a direct e-mail link and an address for written comments.

The planning activities associated with the 2030 Long Range Plan update were conducted in an atmosphere of partnership and coordination with Indiana’s regional and local transportation planning entities. During May and June, 2006, INDOT’s Planning Section conducted a series of 27 early coordination meetings. The meetings were mostly conducted in the field at the offices of the various planning entities. The early coordination meetings consisted of six INDOT district meetings, one with each of the districts, fourteen individual metropolitan planning organization meetings and, seven regional planning organization meetings.

Notes were taken for each of the twenty-seven early coordination meetings. The notes, including follow-up comments, were then published on the INDOT website for public review and feedback.

Close on the heels of this process, the annual 2006 INDOT District meetings took place in August where representatives from the Long Range Planning Section were on hand to hand out project listing updates regarding the development status of the 2030 Long Range Plan. The public was invited to ask questions and/or to make comments regarding the plan update at the District Meetings or to provide written follow-up comments at a later date.

Draft listings of the 2016 -2030 projects were transmitted to the MPOs and the District Planning Offices in January 2007. Follow-up meetings with the MPOs and the District Planning Offices were then promptly held for the purpose of reviewing the 2016 to 2030 project listings and to provide an opportunity for input prior to the publication of final project listings. Notes from the January 2007 meetings have been published on the INDOT website.

Comments that were received by INDOT, and their responses, are shown in Appendix A.

INDOT District Meetings

Each year, the Indiana Department of Transportation conducts public meetings at each of its six districts throughout the state. The primary purpose of the meetings is to present the draft Indiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (INSTIP). The annual District Meetings are also used to develop and foster lines of communication between the citizens of Indiana and the Indiana Department of Transportation. Prior to the 2007 District Meetings, invitations were mailed from the Districts to transportation stakeholders consisting of members of the Indiana General Assembly, local elected and appointed officials, members of various organizations with interests related to transportation such as environmental and bicycling groups, and persons that have expressed an interest in transportation issues in Indiana. Prior to the meetings, press releases announcing the date, location, times and description of the District Meetings were distributed to media outlets throughout the State of Indiana. The INDOT website also provided an invitation and notice regarding the date, time and locations for each of the six District Meetings.

The 2007 INDOT District Meetings were held in May. Each district served as the host for meetings conducted within its district. And each district scheduled two, 2-hour meetings, an afternoon meeting and in most cases, an evening meeting. While the meeting format varied slightly from district to district, the meetings generally began with an open house format where the public could view static displays and talk with INDOT representatives about specific issues and projects. A representative from the Long Range Planning Section provided a brief overview of

the long range planning process and an update regarding the status of the 2030 Long Range Plan development and requested comments regarding the draft plan and proposed project listing.

Crawfordsville District:

The INDOT Crawfordsville District is located in west central Indiana. The district's geographic area covers twelve full counties and portions of three other counties. Two MPOs lie within the district: Lafayette and Terre Haute. Additionally, a small portion of the West Side of the Indianapolis MPO is located in the Crawfordsville District. The District meetings were held on May 16, 2007, at the district office complex, located near the intersection of I-74 and SR 231 in Crawfordsville.

Fort Wayne District:

The INDOT Fort Wayne District is located in northeastern Indiana. Its geographic area includes fourteen counties and small portions of three other counties: Blackford, Fulton and Jay Counties. The Fort Wayne MPO lies within this district, as does the eastern, Elkhart County portion of the South Bend and Elkhart MPO. The district meetings were held on May 17, 2007, at the district office complex, located at 5333 Hatfield Road, just east of the I-69 interchange with US 30 off State Road 930 at Fort Wayne.

Greenfield District:

The INDOT Greenfield District is located in east central Indiana. The district's geographic area includes a little more than fifteen counties. There are four MPOs within the district: Anderson, Indianapolis, Kokomo and Muncie. The district meetings were held on May 23, 2007, at the District offices, 32 South Broadway, Greenfield, Indiana.

LaPorte District:

The INDOT LaPorte District is located in northwest Indiana. The district's geographic area includes thirteen counties. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) serves as the MPO for the urbanized areas in Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties. The St. Joseph County portion of the South Bend and Elkhart MPO also lies within the boundaries of the LaPorte District. The district meetings were held on May 24, 2007, at the LaPorte District Offices, 315 East Boyd Boulevard in LaPorte.

Seymour District:

The INDOT Seymour District is located in southeastern Indiana. The district's geographic area includes eighteen counties and portions of five other counties: Morgan, Owen, Shelby Lawrence and Crawford Counties. The Columbus and Bloomington MPOs lie within the district, as does the southern, Johnson County portion of the Indianapolis MPO. The Indiana Counties of Clark and Floyd are also a part of the Louisville, Kentucky MPO. The district meetings were held on May 22, 2007, at the Seymour District Offices, 185 Agrico Lane, just west of the I-65 interchange with US 50 in Seymour.

Vincennes District:

The INDOT Vincennes District is located in southwest Indiana. The district's geographic area includes sixteen counties. The Evansville Transportation Study (EUTS), the MPO for the Evansville urbanized area is located in the district. The Vincennes district meetings were held on May 15, 2007, at the Vincennes District Offices, 3650 South US Highway 41 in Vincennes.

Figure 3-5 is a map that depicts the Indiana Department of Transportation's six district boundaries and the location of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

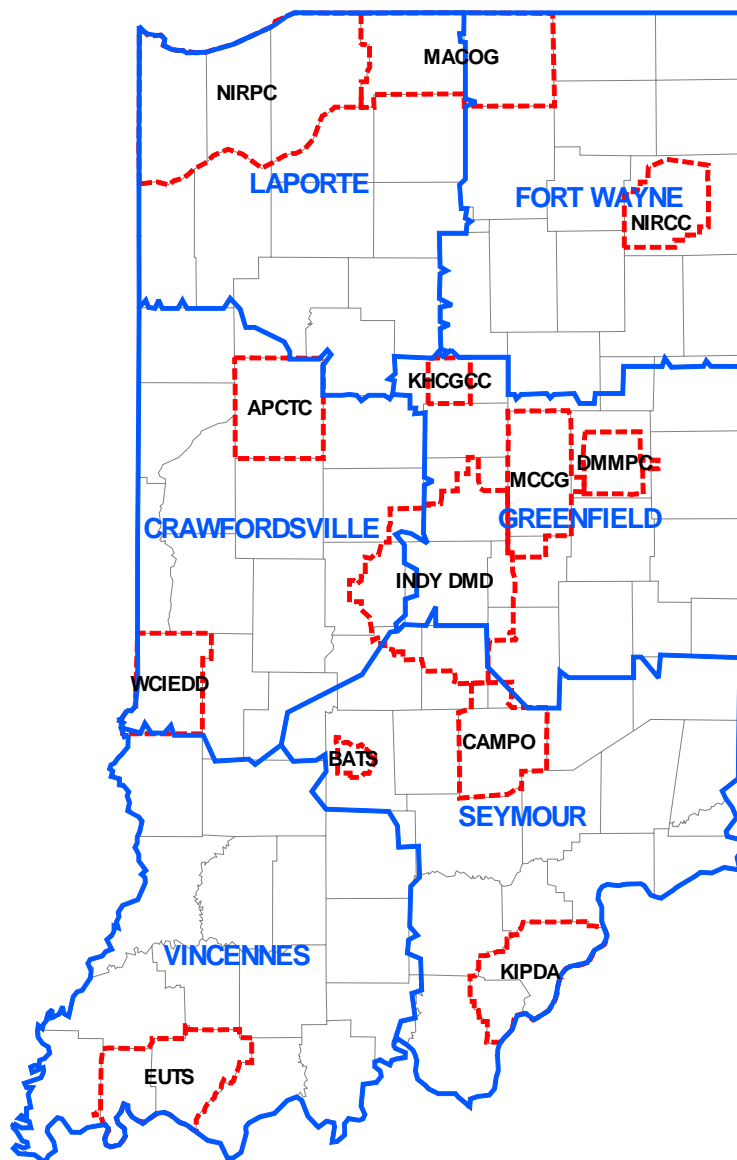


Figure 3-5

Summary

Throughout the process of updating the Long Range Transportation Plan to a 2030 planning horizon, INDOT has communicated the long range plan development process to state transportation professionals, local elected officials, and the public at MPO conferences and the Purdue Road School. In addition, comments were provided by local elected officials and the public in the Program Development Process. The MPOs provide local input in urbanized areas and the RPOs provide local input in the more rural areas.